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TWO CHRISTIAN OUTLOOKS

THE EDITOR

IN modern Catholic writing we may detect two outlooks which seem at first sight to be fundamentally opposed. The first is that of the Christian humanist who, following St Thomas Aquinas, bases his conception of life on the essential goodness of nature. Not only does he stand firmly by the natural law in opposition to some of the theories of the Reformers, but he regards human nature with all its powers, physical as well as spiritual, as God-made and therefore good and as tending in one way or another towards a good end. Man is a single unit, soul informing body, and these two elements in his make-up have powers—the mind and will, the sense and the emotions, which interact in a single human life. And all this was created by God. Man, therefore, as a whole is perfectible by what is known as ‘culture’ as well as by grace. His human knowledge, his feeling and physical experiences, his natural affections and his psychological reactions all play their part together with grace, charity and faith in building him up to full stature as a creature destined for true completion in heaven only after the resurrection of the body.

On the other hand there are Christian writers who point to the constant tradition shown strikingly in the doctrine of St Paul and exemplified in the lives of innumerable saints to the effect that we should turn our eyes away from this present life, led always in a valley of tears, towards the blessedness of heaven which is beyond the reach not only of all the senses but of human knowledge and love as well. The things of sense, emotions, feelings, affections, are full of allurements which are constantly drawing us away from God. The beauties of nature as well as the triumphs of human intelligence inevitably ensnare us in the traps of pride or sensuality. In order to lead a good Christian life we must cut away all that is not God himself, concentrate on the life of the soul and be prepared to enter heaven without an eye or without a foot, humanly incapacitated but spiritually and supernaturally safe in the love of God. Those who adopt this penitential outlook accuse the Christian humanist of ‘naturalism’ or ‘humanitarianism’. In other words they say he is man-centred

rather than God-centred in his view of life; he is attempting to gain the whole world and suffering the loss of his own soul which is *the* essential feature of Christian life.

There is, of course, truth in both these outlooks. It might be said perhaps that the former is theoretically true but that the latter is the practical and workable view which takes into account the actual state of affairs. But this would be a dangerous generalization; for the humanist holds to certain fundamental principles which run right through the Christian life. The real opposite to his teaching is that of the Manichee who believes that all the physical side of human life is evil and that human perfection lies in some sort of destruction of everything but the soul. It is only on the humanists' ground that we can understand such essential features of Christian life as the liturgy or the sacraments, or for that matter the Incarnation itself, since the Word of God came to sanctify the whole man by taking flesh. Our Lord wept and became righteously indignant, he showed sympathy and a special affection for St John and St Mary Magdalen, and finally he rose again with a glorified body, sitting at meals with his Apostles not because he was hungry but because it was a good thing for members of his society to eat together.

There is of course a hierarchy in the good things of human existence. They are not all equally good or beneficial. The first things must be kept first so that the less important must be kept in their place or even jettisoned if the primary perfection of the soul is in any jeopardy. But man's perfect completion consists not merely in bringing his soul alone to sanctity, but in an integrity of his whole nature, with all its parts, so diverse and often so divergent, knit together in unity within the life of God. All things were created in the Word, and within the Word made flesh, risen in glory, is to be found the fulness of man.

But there is of course another element, a factual one, that gives the ascetic and penitential Christian a claim to be more practical and realistic, and that is the fact of original sin. The effect of original sin was to disintegrate man and to disturb the balance of the hierarchy of good things in his nature. As he is composed of so many parts each made to attain its own proper good, disintegrated man very easily places the lesser good before the higher. He finds himself torn into pieces as he is dragged in so many apparently different points of the compass at once.

The good that he would he does not, and the evil that he would not that he does. His inclinations have lost the balance of power so that the lower are often the more powerful. Above all the human will has been weakened and can so easily be deflected towards the more superficially attractive at the expense of the essential, more hidden and more difficult good of the soul. Moreover, through this first fault man has involved himself in a universal upheaval and malaise in which he is easily confounded and led astray. The whole world, the whole of creation is groaning and travailing, its hierarchy upset, and despite its true beauty and perfection providing that 'vale of tears', through which the Christian has to walk.

The extent of this disintegration can only be measured by the act which initiated the re-forming of what had been shattered, namely the Crucifixion, the act of redemption. Integrity is the ideal but it can only be reached through the destruction of the life of the very Son of God in the most bitter of agonies. And any human being who wishes to reach his perfection must also die with Christ, be scourged and crucified with him. His life was the most precious, the fullest, of all human lives and that had to be lost in order that the new, re-integrated life might restore perfection to mankind. The lives of lesser men, with infinitely less intelligence and will and sensitivity must undergo the same process if they are to find their completion. The Christian humanist may be fascinated by the wonder of the Resurrection but he must meet the Christian ascetic on Calvary if he is to attain his ideal.

In these two outlooks we are presented with a very real problem if we wish to lead a fully Christian life. If I am setting out to follow Christ I am faced constantly by decisions arising from these views. Am I to read the innumerable attractive books, imaginative or otherwise, which are not specifically concerned with my calling to heaven? They are good, but there is so much I could study and meditate concerning the mysteries of the faith that even if I kept at it every moment of my life I should never be satisfied or sufficiently imbued with the truth. Should I spend time on good music and good films, should I glide down the Thames in a punt for a week of my holiday? Or would it not be better to save up all those precious hours for retreats and days of recollection? Perhaps the problem is not posed as baldly

as that, but it is nearly always present in some form. The Christian humanist will be inclined to stress not only the need for recreation but also the benefit for the personality of a broadened intelligence, a more discerning spirit, a critical judgment, all of which are encouraged by the arts, the humanities and the human sciences. The ascetic will be inclined to regard all such pursuits as unimportant and a waste of time, and often as occasions of sin, in that they distract from the habitual presence of the Trinity within the soul and encourage the Christian to tarry by the wayside. The humanist will find powerful help and solace in human love; the ascetic will attempt to cut out any sort of 'particular friendship'. The humanist will set out to find God in the wind and in the willow tree; the ascetic will avert his face from the gentle breeze and keep his eyes on the ground lest the things of sense should allure him away from the divine Beloved.

But both men have to meet in the Paschal Mystery which combines the complete self-denial of the Cross with the perfection of human life in the Resurrection. The humanist must be ready to set aside all the wonders of God's creation for God himself, and the ascetic must be made aware of the glory of what God has made. The humanist must be ready to accept the truth of the vast penitential literature which deals with God and the soul alone, while his seeming opponent must begin to appreciate the sanctification of all 'humanities' in the splendour of the liturgy and the beauty and integrity of Christ's human flesh and spirit.

Both views are therefore necessary to balance each other in the Christian life; but at Easter they must be wed together in the single mystery of Redemption, the Pasch which combines death with life, and offers man the only way of wholeness and holiness which, like body and soul in man, unites two essential elements in one reality.

FROM THE LITURGY FOR EASTER

ACCORDING TO THAT OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

IF any be pious and a lover of God, let him partake of this fair and radiant festival.

If any be a faithful servant, let him come in rejoicing in the joy of his Lord.

If any have wearied himself with fasting, let him now enjoy his reward.

If any have laboured from the first hour, let him today receive his rightful due. If any have come at the third, let him feast with thankfulness. If any have arrived at the sixth, let him in no wise be in doubt, for in nothing shall he suffer loss. If any be as late as the ninth, let him draw near, let him in no wise hesitate. If any arrive only at the eleventh, let him not be fearful on account of his slowness.

For the Master is bountiful and receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him of the eleventh hour even as to him who has laboured from the first. He is merciful to the last, and provides for the first. To one he gives, and to another he shows kindness. He receives the works, and welcomes the intention. He honours the act, and commends the purpose.

Enter ye all, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and let both the first and those who come after partake of the reward. Rich and poor, dance one with another. Ye who are strong and ye who are heedless, do honour to this day. Ye who fast and ye who fast not, rejoice today.

The table is full-laden: do ye all fare sumptuously.

The calf is ample: let none go forth hungry.

Let all partake of the banquet of faith. Let all partake of the riches of goodness.

Let none lament his poverty; for the Kingdom is manifested for all.

Let none bewail his transgressions; for pardon has dawned from the tomb.

Let none fear death; for the death of the Saviour has set us free. He has quenched death, who was subdued by it.

He has despoiled Hades, who descended into Hades.

Hades was embittered when it tasted of his flesh, and Isaias,

anticipating this, cried out saying: Hades was embittered when it met thee face to face below. It was embittered, for it was rendered void. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was despoiled. It was embittered, for it was fettered. It received a body, and it encountered God. It received earth, and came face to face with Heaven. It received that which it saw, and fell whence it saw not.

O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?

Christ is risen and thou art cast down.

Christ is risen and the demons have fallen.

Christ is risen and the angels rejoice.

Christ is risen and life is made free.

Christ is risen and there is none dead in the tomb.

For Christ is raised from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. To him be glory and dominion from all ages to all ages. *Amen.*



JUSTICE

(An imaginary sermon delivered to a non-existent congregation)

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

WHEN our Lord said 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice', he did not mean, presumably, those who are out to get justice, agitators demanding justice for the workers, or men determined to defend the sacred rights of property. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst, not after the rights of justice, but after the virtue of justice, who are eager to do, not to receive justice. These are the ones who shall be filled.

This virtue of justice, being just, is not only a matter for judges or persons in authority. It is the very first virtue required of every Christian. And it is also the very last virtue, the one that will be looked for by your judge at the end. On whether you are truly just or not will depend whether you go to heaven or to hell. Hell for the unjust, heaven for the just; the just to the right and the

wicked to the left, and these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting. Then after that final sorting out, when the cockle has been gathered into bundles and thrown into the fire, then shall the just shine like the sun in the kingdom of my father. None who is unjust shall be there, and none who is just shall be missing. I think you will find that whenever heaven and eternal life and the kingdom are mentioned in the New Testament, it is nearly always in the same breath with justice and the just. These things are the reward of the just, the hope of the just, the habitation of the just. Justice is our passport into heaven. Unless your justice abound more than the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Not even charity, without which the other virtues are worth nothing at all, can replace justice. Justice is sometimes said to be the Old Testament virtue, while charity is the commandment of the New. It's true that the grace preached in the New Testament has superseded the rule of the law which was given in the Old; but the old wasn't simply scrapped with the coming of the new. Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. So too, charity perfects justice but cannot do without it. Once a house is built, you cannot remove its foundations with impunity. 'Open to me the gates of justice', cries the Old Testament, 'and going into them I shall confess to the Lord.' 'This is the gate of the Lord', answers Christ from the New Testament, pointing to his cross, and to his gospel of love, and to his Church cemented together by charity. 'This is the gate of the Lord', says Christ the door, 'and the *just* shall enter into it.'

Surely then justice is an important virtue. And like most of the things that really matter, it is something very simple. I don't mean that it's easy but it *is* simple; there is nothing complicated or subtle about it. It doesn't call for cleverness or skill or a good education. It is rather like faith, which is another foundation of charity. By faith you believe in God, you believe in the truth; by justice, it's as though you allow God to believe in you, you do the truth. By faith you see straight, by justice you act and live straight. Justice means being straight, and injustice means being crooked or twisted—a crook or a twister. To be really just we must be straight in three ways—straight in ourselves, straight with others, and straight with God.

Straight in myself; St Joseph was a just man, and St Joseph was also a carpenter. He knew from his trade what being straight means. He knew that if his planks and staves and blocks of wood weren't cut straight and true, they wouldn't fit where he wanted them. He knew that pretty furniture which isn't as solid as it looks, gimcrack chairs with fancy backs which fall to bits when you sit on them, are just a lie. The job of a carpenter is to make things which can be relied on to do what they are meant to do, chairs which can be sat on, wheels which will turn, drawers which will open and shut. Only when he has mastered that, can he think of making his work beautiful. Just so, it's no use my talking grandly about charity and the spiritual life, if I haven't yet mastered the A.B.C. of justice, and learnt to be honest, and to speak the truth, to be reliable in my duties, to be a faithful friend on rainy days as well as fine; in a word, to be a good man and true, of whom people can say: 'He's straight, is Jack; you know where you are with him'.

It's true, indeed, that there is such a thing as imperfect, or unfinished justice. A chair may be very well made, but you have every excuse for grumbling at the carpenter if you get a splinter every time you sit on it, because he didn't bother to sandpaper the seat. So you meet people who are sound at heart all right, but they stick a splinter into you every time you touch them, because their rough justice lacks the polish of a little gentleness.

We have been talking about being straight or just in oneself, as though it could be managed without reference either to other people or to God. But in fact justice is a social virtue, and it's nonsense to think you can be straight in yourself unless you are straight with others. And yet it's a sort of nonsense that most of us find it very easy to indulge in. We are prepared to be honest and fair-minded—up to a certain limit. But beyond that—well, people are fair game. It doesn't readily occur to us that such an attitude puts a big twist in our straightness straight away.

What's the first rule of justice? Our Lord gives it, and I don't think anyone would dispute it: 'Whatsoever you want men to do to you, so you do to them'. Not any particular men, just men. Do as you would be done by. It's so easy to apply it to others. 'How would you like it if I treated you like that?' But for ourselves there are some rather more convenient rules. 'If I don't take care of myself, nobody else will. In this life it's every man for himself,

and the devil take the hindermost.' He certainly will, but when the time comes for that we'll find that the last will be first and the first last. The hindermost he takes will be those who took best care of themselves. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it.'

Then there's that other favourite: 'Everyone else does it, why shouldn't I?' 'Others make it a point of honour to do as little as they can for as much as they can; why shouldn't I?' Or another variety: 'He wouldn't think twice about pulling a fast one on me; why shouldn't I get there first for a change?' Are there any of us, I wonder, who can honestly say that they have never let their thoughts run on those lines, and acted accordingly? And yet we know, don't we, in our heart of hearts, that these persuasive little voices are unjust. We have duties to each other and to society, and justice will not excuse us if we dodge them. Never mind if everyone else is busy double-crossing each other twelve hours a day; that is all the more reason for you and me to be straight in our dealings, even in our dealings with the twister. The worst scoundrel imaginable has rights, and you and I have duties towards him, simply because he is a man, a human being for whom Christ died. We have duties towards the community, or rather the several communities, to which we belong, our family, our neighbours, our country; to the parish, to our fellow Catholics, to the Church, to Christ. We Catholics especially, who have the quite undeserved honour of being members of the body of Christ, should be models of justice to our fellow men, the best of neighbours, the most loyal of citizens and subjects, the truest of friends.

It is here that the good Catholic is open to the temptation of the Pharisees, who went astray precisely by getting this matter of justice all wrong. Unless he's careful he can become proud of his religion, as the Pharisees were about theirs, in the wrong way. He can develop a contemptuous attitude towards non-Catholics, suggesting that they are all either fools or knaves; forgetting that it is thanks to no mental or moral qualities of his that he is a Catholic; forgetting that the Church seen from the outside looks very different from what we know it to be from within. To outsiders it means those odd, and sometimes rather objectionable, stand-offish people known as Catholics. We have a positive duty to show them the Church of God in as favourable a light as possible, to give a reasonable account, as St Peter says, of the faith that is in us, and

we won't do it very well if we are aggressive about it and allow ourselves to sneer at the other man's opinions. How much apostolic work is ruined for want of plain good manners! But if we are to be good ambassadors of Christ to this wicked world, not a little divine diplomacy, consisting of justice and charity, is demanded of us.

St Paul tells us why it was that the Pharisees went wrong. It was because they were ignorant of the justice of God and wanted to establish their own, and so did not submit to the justice of God. They went the wrong way about putting themselves straight with God, since they assumed that justice was something that would put God straight with them. Being just meant fulfilling the works of the law, which would oblige God to reward them, as if he were a slot-machine which delivers the goods automatically. Well, you may say, what's wrong with keeping the law and being regular in the practice of religion? We have to be, don't we? And God has promised to reward us for it, hasn't he? Yes, yes, but what counts is our attitude in doing good works. We must do them by way of submitting to the justice of God, not by way of establishing our own. We must realize, in St Paul's phrase, that God has created the good works for us to walk in, and so the credit for them belongs to him rather than to us. 'Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory.' 'Who shall go up into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent of hands and the clean of heart, who has done no injustice, neither is guile found in his mouth.' But which of us, which of the Pharisees, could honestly claim to be **such** a man? There is only one man like that, who cannot be convicted of sin, the Just One, just in his own right, the man Christ Jesus. Consequently it's only in him, through faith in his blood, that the rest of us, who left to ourselves are crooked from birth, can climb the mountain of the Lord. That was what the Pharisees wouldn't accept. Knowing not the justice of God, they wanted to set up their own, independent of God's grace.

Our Lady too, as we know, was sinless, and therefore perfectly just, perfectly straight. But she had that privilege in virtue of the justice of her Son. As we say in the Litany, she is the mirror of justice, reflecting the brightness of the sun of justice. And that's what we must try to be, little mirrors, as clear and polished as possible reflecting the justice, the redeeming, saving justice of

Christ. Only in Christ will it be possible for our justice to abound more than the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, and for us to enter the kingdom of heaven. If we let go of him, if we give up the faith, we are lost. If we wander from him who is the way and the truth, we cannot, by going our own way, come to him who is the life. With St Paul we must be ready to suffer the loss of all things and count them but as dung that we may gain Christ, and may be found in him, not having our own justice, but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus, justice in faith.



A MARTYR FOR PEACE¹

FRANCIS M. STRATMANN, O.P.

BEFORE the first world war, there was in Germany no talk of refusing to serve in war. True, we heard that in England and America there were a few sects that refused war service or military service even during peace time. But they were considered strange people; mentally and morally not quite sound!

During the four years of the first world war, we became more thoughtful. Afterwards there was an upsurge of the anti-war movement, but it was suppressed by the Nazis. The second world war, stretching over five years, was so horrible that probably the majority of all Germans came to appreciate the point of Conscientious Objection. Indeed, an interior objection, a protest of the moral sense, gripped them. But exteriorly they did not dare to come forward. In fact, their political and military thought, the legacy of centuries, held that there were moral objections against open resistance to directives issued by legitimate authority.

As a result, the Germans as a whole not only did not refuse their services in the war unleashed by Hitler, but most of them, even most of the Christians, expressed serious religious doubts, whenever this or that individual consistently and bravely answered 'no' to his draft call. Was such an answer, they asked, compatible with Christian ethics? Was not obedience to the government still a duty,

¹ Translated by John Doebele from *Der Christ in der Welt* (Spring, 1953, Nachreihengasse 48, Vienna, 17).

so long as the one in power was there 'legitimately', even though he was a criminal? And was open rebellion 'prudent'? People did not recall that there is a short-sighted prudence that sooner or later proves to be foolishness in the eyes of God, and soon too in the light of history. Thus conscientious objection to service under Hitler remained the very rare exception.

It is all the more heartening then, to learn of the position of a Catholic priest, Franz Reinisch, of the Pallottine Order, who like a bright and burning light penetrated the general fogging of consciences. Heinrich Kreutzberg, at that time an army chaplain who became acquainted with Fr Reinisch in the Berlin military prison, has with great diligence collected all the accounts about him and has sympathetically portrayed the interior and exterior development of his hero in a recent book: *Franz Reinisch, a Martyr of our Times*.²

Franz Reinisch, born in 1903 in Feldkirch, Austria, came from a respected and very religious Tyrolean family. He received the usual classical education. After first studying law in Innsbruck and Kiel, he took up theology. He was ordained priest and in 1928 entered the Pallottine Order. He had been a happy student, but at first the discipline of the seminary, especially the no-smoking rule, was so difficult for him that he considered leaving. However, his will-power and generosity of heart won despite all temptation.

Then came Hitler's war, reaching out its hand for him, too. To fight for Hitler? For the strengthening and extension of his anti-Christian rule? To kill innocent people for this tyrant whose hands had been blood-stained since 1934? Franz Reinisch had a steel temperament. He was 'radical through and through' and 'he liked radical solutions best'. So you might think that he made up his mind at once when, in 1941, he received the preliminary notice for his call-up. But that was not the case.

Despite his spontaneous manner, Fr Reinisch never made up his mind lightly in matters of conscience. It did not occur to him to play the hero. He did not feel that he was a hero in the eyes of God, but rather a weak man, and he distrusted himself. Apart from his new situation, his inmost longing was an ardent desire for perfection, for an increase in his love of God. This can be attained by the toilsome way of daily trial of oneself—a way, as Fr Reinisch knew well, that is perhaps more difficult than an

² Franz Reinisch. *Ein Martyrer unserer Zeit* (Limburg 1952, Lahn-Verlag).

actually greater but shorter single heroic total sacrifice. It can be almost a flight from oneself, from the ever-recurring weakness, if one makes an end to the long struggle and the weary failures with one quick offering of one's life for God.

This steep way suited our idealistic priest more than did the other. What was decisive, naturally, was the demand to co-operate in a war that to him was evidently unjust. Here was the opportunity, as it were, to brush aside with one stroke his own weaknesses, the prudence of the flesh in himself and in others, and to soar to holiness. The 'violent spiritual struggle' ended with his determination to refuse to obey the call-up (which did not come until a year later) and with that to suffer death in witness to the kingdom of Christ. . . .

His parents were worthy of him. Naturally it wrung their hearts to think of losing such a son thus early, and of his death as a criminal in the eyes of many. At his farewell visit to Innsbruck, he made the Stations of the Cross with his mother in the cemetery. At the first Station he said: 'I too stand before the judge like that.' At the ninth Station, 'Now I also lie there.' At the thirteenth Station he took his mother's hand: 'Mother, can you too be a mother of sorrows, who bears her cross without breaking down?' His mother answered slowly: 'If God gives me the strength, I will be able.' He offered Mass once more in the Sacred Heart Church, with his father, Councillor Dr Reinisch, acting as server.

He then left for Kissingen, as ordered by the draft notice. However, he did not mean to become a soldier for Hitler, but to declare his intention to refuse the army oath. Few of the officers that he encountered during the course of the various examinations were harsh on him. Interior agreement and admiration were noted in some, but few possessed the stature of the defendant, and in the end they all did their 'duty', letting the 'law' of the State take its course, even when that State was Hitler's government.

We can presume that the conscientious objector was reminded of the viewpoint of leading Church figures. For Fr Reinisch answered 'that "he realized that his position did not correspond with the official stand of the Church, but his decision came from his own conscience"'. He had struggled for a long while within himself but now finally it was clear to him that he had to refuse the military oath.'

The prisoner was taken first to the Berlin Tegel Prison. The

first military chaplain whose duty it was to visit him refused him Holy Communion!—‘in order to impress upon him his duty to take the oath’. Of course this priest, too, doubtless acted according to his conscience. The next chaplain was Fr Kreutzberg, the author of our book. He brought Fr Reinisch not just one consecrated host, but several, so that he could have the Blessed Sacrament in his cell day and night, and give himself communion every morning.

Later, he also brought him unconsecrated hosts, and some wine, so that he could celebrate Mass early in the morning before the waking bells. ‘I offered him a few books and pamphlets.’ He declined with friendly thanks. Showing his New Testament, he said: ‘I have a book, and that is the New Testament.’ Later, a few hours before his execution, he declared: ‘If for ten years I had nothing to read but the New Testament, it would still be enough for me.’

At Fr Kreutzberg’s request Fr Reinisch set down his reasons for refusing to take the oath. Among them were: ‘because today it is open season for attacks on the Church; see the recent pastoral letters of the German bishops, and then the papal encyclical *On Germany*, of March, 1937. Further, the extension of persecutions. Finally, the Nazi principle, “might comes before right”, forces me to resist. For me there is no oath of allegiance to such a government. I must not and will not take the oath “with reservations”.’

Strong attempts seem to have been made by fellow members of his Order, and even by his superiors, to make him change his mind. They even appealed to his duty to obey his religious superiors. But Fr Reinisch ‘resolutely rejected the reproaches that he was disobedient to his superiors and that his conscience was in error’.

He was transferred to the Brandenburg prison, where in the last days of his life he was troubled by the deputy chaplain. This priest, otherwise quite understanding, warm-hearted and thoroughly aware of the primacy of individual conscience, was nevertheless of the opinion that Fr Reinisch had an ‘erroneous conscience’. Like so many others, he referred to the conduct of our Lord himself, and to the teaching of St Paul, who held that even an evil ruler had to be obeyed.

It is difficult to understand how here again people overlooked

the simple but essential distinction between obedience in things which, despite their regulation by an evil authority, are in themselves good or indifferent and things that are on the other hand bad in themselves. You must obey even an evil ruler, as a Nero, a Hitler, or a Stalin—but not *in* his evil! Even a government that is criminal through and through can issue thousands of regulations that serve the civil order, commerce and trade, and even justice; every citizen must follow them!

But when it is a question of immoral decrees, 'we must obey God rather than men'. With this rule St Peter, the first Pope, declared plainly and clearly for all times that government laws are sometimes *against* the divine law, and that in these evil things no one has any longer the right to be a 'loyal citizen of the State'. It can be the citizen's duty to take a position against the State.

Only that civil disposition is genuine, honourable and divinely blessed which is in every case oriented towards God. It is also the best and the only true service in the interest of the State. If millions of Germans had refused to follow Hitler in his criminal plundering wars, that would have been the most powerful and noblest patriotic deed in history. It was not Fr Reinisch who had the erroneous conscience, but the Brandenburg chaplain, along with millions of others. Their error lay in assuming the duty of obedience even in cases where the State ordered something evil, and hence too when it ordered them to invade neighbouring lands, plundering them and murdering their citizens in droves.

Pope Pius XII had openly branded as lawless the wars of aggression against Poland, Holland and Belgium in 1939 and 1940. But, as was typical of the lying character of the Hitler régime, even those wars were called 'defensive', and many believed it, or else drank in the assertion as opium for their consciences. Even for the Brandenburg chaplain, the most obvious wars of aggression had, through the systematic dulling of conscience, been transformed into wars of defence. He told Fr Reinisch: 'To defend your country is not against the law of God.'

Those words gave the poor prisoner a sleepless night. But his sound conscience was victorious, he kept to his protest, and went to his death for it. This much can be conceded the Brandenburg chaplain: if Fr Reinisch had felt obliged to refuse absolutely *every* service to the government, he would in fact have had an 'erroneous conscience'. He could, according to the principles explained, have

taken a *civil* oath. But it was a question of an *army* oath, and of military obedience, which had to be absolute for all soldiers. To refuse the oath in this clearly limited field was not 'erroneous' but objectively correct.

To the credit of the chaplain it should be added that he too fully acknowledged the subjective purity of the decision of conscience, although he considered it objectively false. 'Whoever', he said, 'feels urged to a certain action through divine prompting must follow that prompting. No man can do more than to be true to his conscience. May God bless you and strengthen you, my dear fellow priest.'

God did bless and fortify the man ordained for death. The two priests prayed together through the final night. Then the last confession, and extreme unction, on the way to heaven. It was within the Octave of the feast of the Assumption. Fr Reinisch, a great venerator of Mary, had hoped to enter heaven on August 15th, the feast day itself, and to be able to apply the words of the Church's prayer for that day to himself: 'Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come and receive your crown.' But he had to wait until the 21st.

He wrote a final farewell letter to his parents and brother and sister: 'I rejoice at this moment, singing with Jesus and Mary, with the angels and archangels, the martyrs, confessors, virgins, disciples, with my acquaintances and relatives, singing the always new song, "Praise God who sits on the throne, and the Lamb, Amen"'. I love you, God. You know everything, and you know that I love you. Good shepherd, lead me to good pastures! Mary, Queen of heaven, Mary, come and take me. I hurry to you with open arms. I am your child! St Thérèse, little flower, Fr Vincent Pallotti, my patron saint, Francis Xavier; all of you come to meet me and lead me to the Blessed Trinity! O love, love, God is love!'

It was all over shortly before five a.m. He and six other men were beheaded within the space of three minutes. Four of the others were Catholics. Before they were placed on the scaffold, the chaplain handed each one the crucifix to kiss, and recited a few short prayers. Then the executioner stepped forward in frock-coat and top-hat and released the guillotine. . . .

Fr Reinisch refused military service under the Hitler government. Can he be grouped among those who reject *all* military service *on principle*? Perhaps not. 'I can swear allegiance to the

German nation', he once declared, 'but never to a man like Hitler.' Yet this much is certain: in any other war, he would have followed his own conscience in deciding what he had to do. And even in a war begun as a genuine defensive war by an authority worthy of respect, it is highly probable that he would have refused to carry out any order incompatible with natural and with Christian morality. Such as, for example, an order to drop a bomb on the civil population or to shoot hostages.

Later, in June 1950, the French Cardinals and Archbishops were to declare that for the disciple of Christ it is a shocking scandal even to ask the question whether they approved the use of the atom bomb, that strikes at combatants and at civilians without distinction. Fr Reinisch would in all certainty have recognized this as beyond argument. He would have carried out none of the immoral orders that are to be expected in modern total war that destroys everything.

For all of us it is of great importance to be guided by the best members of our faith. This book also contains, in an appendix, a report of the fate of another conscientious objector, the Austrian farmer Franz Jagerstatter, who had three children and who could be seen daily with his wife at the communion rail. He too died a holy death when a diabolical State executed him as a criminal. People who live and die like that force every faithful Christian to reflect on the 'duty' of military service, so readily accepted and even extolled by the majority. Their lives are a forceful argument against universal conscription (usually labelled 'for defence', but used often enough for ruthless aggression). They urge us at the present time in Germany to preserve at least the present constitutional right to conscientious objection to armed service.

Those who claim this right do not by that condemn the others who believe they must comply with every demand for military service and renounce all active or passive resistance to the public authority. As Fr Reinisch once said in speaking of these people: 'Not all possess my clear perception.' Many of them became soldiers and fighting men with serious doubts, but in the last analysis they believed they were doing their duty and continued in it to death.

As Ernest Wiechert said of them, in his address to German youth of 1949, 'The laurel they gained was the laurel of many sacrifices. Perhaps it was a false sacrifice they made of themselves, a false

obedience they practised, but their hearts were right, and those were the hearts of your comrades. Many believed it was a matter of their homeland; they did not know it was only a matter of the Nazi party. Many others, however, did not believe this at all. They knew they were dealing with an unjust cause, and they hated him who sent them. But they thought it a soldier's duty to obey, so they obeyed.

'In the storm of battle they were so utterly alone and abandoned that for them death was a release. They accepted death as they had accepted a share in the guilt. Their graves number in the hundreds of thousands. We should bow before them, before them and their mothers, who had to let them go, knowing the while that they cursed those who sent them. Much has been suffered, on this earth, that few know about; it has been suffered because of error, of weakness, and of obedience. Lost blood, precious blood, irreplaceable blood, but which one of us will dare to be a judge over those who erred?'

We can and should think of them with genuine esteem and love, and yet we can and should keep in mind that the objective 'error'—probably in most cases without subjective guilt—was on their side, and not on the side of those who for the sake of God and of their consciences refused military service. To these latter is due the greater respect!

II

A PRIEST WHO STOOD UP TO HITLER¹

MAX PRIBILLA, S.J.

THE book *Franz Reinisch, ein Martyrer unserer Zeit*, by Heinrich Kreutzberg, published recently in Germany, contains a remarkable tale. It depicts vividly and impressively the life and suffering of the Pallottine priest Franz Reinisch, who was condemned to death on July 7th, 1942, and executed in Brandenburg on August 21st, 1942, at the age of thirty-nine. Called up for army service, he had firmly refused, for reasons of conscience, to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler. He knew, of course, that many others in the same situation thought and acted differently. That gave him reason

¹ Translated by John Doebele from *Stimmen der Zeit* (March 1953).

for reflection. But with all consideration and prayer, he remained ever more confirmed in the decision to make a visible protest against the unjust government then in power and its 'leader' by refusing to take the military oath. He was unwilling to swear fidelity. Moreover, as a native Austrian, he viewed Hitler as a usurper in that country, and denied all duty of obedience to him.

Once resolved, he kept clearly to his path. He never attempted to conceal or disguise his true conviction through pretence. He was one of the few who frankly and openly acknowledged themselves as opponents of the criminal Nazi system, the system that persecuted the Church. Indeed, he reaffirmed his antagonism even in court, at a time when he could almost certainly expect the death sentence. He accepted all the hardships of imprisonment and the sentence with manly calm, without moaning and with firm trust in God, and thus encouraged his friends to bear the great suffering in like spirit.

It is worth special mention that he courageously took the momentous resolution upon his own conscience rather than burden anyone else with it. No one must imagine that such a sacrifice, with all its consequences, is easy; it is far more difficult than the death of the soldier who falls in battle.

Alone and forsaken, the unpretentious Pallottine father, with his child-like piety, placed his head on the block for the sake of his conscience, in order not to serve a corrupt system. This priest, through the voluntary offering of his life, put to shame the all too many of us who, because of their insight and position, were able and called upon far sooner than he to resistance against the unjust power then ruling.

The objection that this was an 'unnecessary martyrdom', that the prudent, the anxious, and the overly clever might raise is in this case out of place. There were of course morally acceptable ways open to Franz Reinisch that he might have used to avoid his hard fate. He knew them himself and they were recommended to him by others. He had not sought out the conflict that was confronting him, but he was unwilling to evade it. He wished to challenge it honestly, and in that way to set the example of a firm Christian character in a world of weak compliance.

His conscience would have been erroneous only if he had said that his own action was the duty of all. But he did not say that. His case 'was exceptional'—we would like to add 'unfortunately'!

In times of tyrannic despotism, there will doubtless always be a division of minds. One group, the great majority, will decide for maximum adaptation, in order to protect themselves and their relatives from harm, or 'to prevent a worse evil'. The other group—made up of the few—will see this adaptation as the worst choice, and decide from the very beginning on the sharpest conceivable resistance, risking their lives. There must be people in each nation who, especially in the fateful hours, do not think first of their own welfare, but intervene courageously for justice in public life. And without external success, even in their failure, they establish a great example. This applies especially to the Germans, for their character training is the weakest part of their education.

A brief but important section of a review of this book is due to Fr Kreutzburg, chaplain for Fr Reinisch and also his biographer. Under the conditions of Hitler's Germany, he had to have special prudence, in order on the one hand not to endanger all spiritual ministration in the armed services, and on the other hand, as a priest to render loving aid to the prisoner.

His concluding verdict is characteristic, and correct beyond all doubt: 'It was the great disaster of our nation that there were lacking people who, upright and unconcerned about the consequences, followed their consciences.' In this matter his book is very valuable for the education of our nation.



THE APOSTLE AS POET

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

THE true apostle must be a poet, and an apostle who is not a poet is no true apostle.

In order to understand this claim, we may start by describing the would-be apostle who is no apostle. A Christian sets out to be an apostle for Christ. He joins a Catholic Action group or enters an Order such as that of the Dominicans who specialize in preaching. He begins to prepare himself for the work by reaching down from the shelves of the library large tomes of Christian doctrine and theology. He learns all that the Church commonly

teaches; he delves into St Thomas's deep and precise explanations. Better still, he may con the gospels to discover what Christ himself taught. He will study, too, maybe in a course of apologetics, all the reasons against the faith that are likely to be brought up against him in his missionary activity, and he will discover, not merely 'the answers' as though every problem he met could be answered by his own wit, but, sensibly, he will discover the lines along which such attacks can be met and parried. If he is serious and keen, therefore, he will store in his mind a great system of Christian ideas, understanding them according to his own ability and always deepening his appreciation of these tremendous principles which stem both from revealed religion and from his natural reason. A wonderful world will have been forming in his own mind, a world that approximates in some manner to the Word, the Idea of God, in which all things are made. And in order that this world should receive the spark of life from that Word the would-be apostle does not neglect his prayer, but takes all he learns to the feet of Christ and begs him to make his thought fruitful and not stagnant and sterile. On his knees he learns his theology, meditating the words of the gospels and perhaps on occasion taking his *Summa* to his half-hour period of prayer so that he may think over these truths and explanations in the presence of our Lord.

And he is wise, this self-dedicated apostle; he knows that he must understand the world into which he is to be sent to preach the word. Therefore he studies also the world-movements, the thought of the day. Communism by the time he has finished his studies holds no mystery for him. He knows the materialism of the age and he has read the philosophies that underlie it—not only existentialism and logical-positivism, but also the social theories of the left and the right wings. He has read about the industrial revolution and he has grasped the principles that underlie the unrest among the working classes. The pagans of today who know not Christ are before him in his books and in his mental system.

At last all is prepared and he steps out upon the pulpit or the platform convinced that he can sow the seed of the Word in the soil of the twentieth-century world. Everything that can be said to the multitude is on his lips—and no one pays any attention to what he says. They sleep or turn away. The dull-witted audience cannot hear a word he says; all is noise, a continuous babel of

words that make no stir within their hearts. The gap between the preacher and the people remains unbridged.

How comes it that with all his preparation he is so ineffective? Simply that he has killed or seriously wounded the poet that lies within him, the gift of nature. All his study and even all his prayer has dried up his imagination, so that he now lacks the living image that would stir the dullest wit even though the preacher had but half the knowledge.

If we turn to actual facts, we shall find that often the apostles who have the greatest effect are not always the most learned nor even the most pious or saintly. We find men who are not particularly noted for their adherence to religious observance, men who are even known to lead almost a 'double life'—in the pulpit and in private—yet men who have the art of 'tuning in' to their audience, discovering the 'wave-length' not of the majority only, but of each individual among their hearers. There are men who can talk about St Thomas to young and old, educated and raw, intelligent and obtuse, and bring home something to each, stir something within the various individuals in all their variety. What he talks about may be learned or merely moralizing platitudes. The great mass-movers of our day, also, have cultivated this art to a very high degree; men like Hitler or Billy Graham. The first thing in these cases is not what they say but the way they say it, the manner in which they present the subject of their discoveries. These men have something of the poet within them, whereas the good-hearted, zealous and hard-working 'apostle' has so often killed his poetic genius.

The poet, in effect, is the man who makes things by means of imagination as well as of thought. It is all very well to call this power his creative genius; it is creative only in a metaphorical sense. He does not make things from nothing after the manner of the divine operation, but fashions the things he makes from the raw material of his experience. From what he finds around him in the entire universe the poet recreates, makes something new; old truths become new and living through the action of his imagination and thought; old scenes and experiences take on a new life through this activity. It might be said that the would-be apostle, as we have described him, uses the same activity and recreates with his thought and words the truths that he had studied. But this is not so because he has restricted his experience,

as far as he has been able, to the ideas he has been considering and to his own limited world of prayer and sacred doctrine. He has not tuned in to the whole universe as it exists. The poet has first of all to be receptive to the whole of existence; he has to be silent and to listen. The modern composer for example does not begin by making music, by setting together in a certain order and rhythm sounds that he discovers in his own mind. He has first to listen to the sounds of the present-day world; many of these are harsh and dissonant. The sound of machinery, high-explosives and 'atmospherics' on the radio—all this is part of the experience of modern man; and the composer who shuts himself away as far as he can from the racket of the world and feeds his imagination on sounds of the past, medieval plainsong or the great classics of the nineteenth century will fail to be a true composer and become only a recording instrument of the sounds of past ages; just as the would-be apostle is a recording instrument of ideas of another world. The originals are true and moving in their own right, but the copy is false in that it pretends to belong to the present.

The poet, then, listens to what is present. Yet the present does of course include the past. Tradition has brought man to what he is today, an immense tradition stemming from man's first, primitive experience of the world around him. Within the present experience lies an immense labyrinth of unexpressed, often unconscious experiences of the whole age of man. For example, the present age may be labelled as an irreligious, pagan and even atheistic age; and yet beneath the surface lies the experience of men's worship of the primitive gods and, in Europe, of centuries of adherence to the Trinity through the person of Christ. Indeed, since Christ is the Word of God and since he died for all mankind there lies beneath the present reality of man's way of life the redemptive act, or, as it has been called, 'the redemptive process'.

The poet, therefore, does not listen merely to superficial experience, but his imagination is fired by this tradition. He may not be aware of the nature of what he is receiving. He may, for example, reject the whole story of the Incarnation and the Redemption; and yet if he is a true poet the Redemption, the effect of sacrifice, the death that brings new life will be working in his imagination and thought and eventually appear in his words, his painting or his music. This is why he is able to stir men in the depth of their being and bring to the surface things of

which his hearers were unaware but which lie deep within themselves, latent powers needing merely this spark to set them in motion. The musician does not merely repeat the sounds of the present any more than of the past. Men are aware of the racket around them. But they are unaware of the meaning of that noise, and the true composer creates out of present sound a moving piece of music because he has penetrated to the heart of it, discovered its links with tradition, married it to the primitive instinct for rhythm and dance by which man has worshipped the gods.

In his awareness of the present, the true apostle discovers the instinctive powers in the modern man. He is not satisfied with the superficial appearance of what men do, not carried away by their present immorality or materialism. It is all too easy to generalize about the evils of the present generation, and the 'would-be' apostle who has discovered his own spiritual world will fall a victim to the contrast between his own discovery and what he perceives of 'the world' unless he is very careful not to be carried away by the superficial view. Beneath the good and the evil that he perceives lie these instincts with their immense tradition, instincts that are fundamentally good and fundamentally religious. The true apostle hears the rhythm of religion beneath the hum of the factory, the shriek of the jet plane, or the shattering crash of the atomic explosion. He may not do this consciously, but it is one of the secrets of the success of his words, the poetic secret.

It will be obvious that the poet does not listen in a merely passive manner; he is not *merely* receptive. The so-called creative element in his character lies in his active awareness of reality around him. His perception is an active one by means of the living symbols that fructify his imagination. He does not simply report what he sees either superficially or below the surface; his imagination acting with his mind makes what he perceives into a living image. This may easily be seen in the difference between the photograph of a country scene and the painting of it by a true artist. The artist brings out a new form from the material before him which in its turn stirs something within the admirer of the picture. The artist with words must do the same so that the symbol of his word-picture stirs the inner spirit of his reader or listener. The 'would-be apostle' has learnt only to photograph what he sees of his own world or of 'the world' outside and the photograph

stirs only those who have already experienced what was reproduced on the negative.

But now we must turn specifically to the poet-apostle in order to understand the type of creative imagination that he must train within himself. The material with which he works is the whole of reality in a far more universal mode than in any other type of poet, because he perceives everything that now is in a context of divine grace. Since man was originally created in grace and the Word of God became man and died for the whole human race there is nothing that falls outside the world of grace. The sinner and the devil himself cannot be perceived truly and constructively except in relation to the supernatural because they are what they are only through having refused grace. Moreover there is nothing now that is 'purely natural'. These primitive instincts in man, though they are part of his nature, do not give him purely natural religion; they form a natural element in what must be ultimately either a supernatural religion or the deformation of that religion. The apostle, therefore, sees all things in relation to the Redemption; he understands that Christ is the head of all men and of the whole universe so that everything speaks to him of Christ and of the work of Christ. All that now exists is *in Verbo*, in Christ the Word made flesh, so that the primitive and the complex present is re-formed by the apostle in the Image of God who is the Word, the second Person of the blessed Trinity. By means of his poetic faculty he 'tunes in' to the reality of man as he is today. But this awareness of the rhythm of life is not restricted to the natural; the apostle perceives all this, we might say, as the heartbeat of Christ. The instinct for sacrifice that exists strongly in the patriotism of the soldier dying for his country or in the heroism of the convinced and active Communist is re-formed in the imagination and thought of the apostle in terms of the one central sacrifice of the universe. The myths, symbols and traditions that he discovers hidden in the breast of modern man are redeemed by his imagination, the blood of Christ flowing over them all and purifying them and integrating them within the new life of the Resurrection.

The difference between the poet who is merely concerned in winning allegiance to any 'this-worldly' view that he may have discovered and the true apostle lies in this, that the former perceives only one element in the present situation whereas the apostle perceives it all in the image, we might almost say, in the

imagination, of Christ. Christ himself was the greatest poet and the apostle has become Christ both in the order of imagination and in the order of the inner spirit of grace.

This poetic talent, although a gift to every man by nature, is at first only a latent power which, as we have seen, can be stifled. But if it is to be trained, as the true apostle should train it, it requires an asceticism of its own. The poet not only has to learn the technique of his art, whether in words, music or the plastic arts—and that obviously requires long training and constant practice—but he must also practise a special detachment from the superficial beauties that appear to him. This is especially true of the poet who works with words and sets out to attract people with what he has to say. His temptation is to play to the gallery and to try to stir up emotions that are only transitory and superficial. The life of the people is not truly touched merely by dramatic and histrionic gestures and word-pictures, and it would be a mistake to think that what has been written above is meant to inculcate simply a method of catching the people's attention by the popular appeal to emotions. The apostle must practise a severe detachment from the emotional appeal, so that he can dig deeper into reality and re-discover the fundamental symbols. This means a very real self-denial on his part, for he can only keep clear of the attraction of the success of his own words if he keeps his eye fixed on the ultimate reality of Christ and refuses to be carried along by popularity into unprepared, indiscriminating preaching and insists on having time for silence and the creative awareness of which we have spoken. In the modern world this is perhaps one of the most difficult types of asceticism—to insist on not being rushed and on a real preparation for his writings and preaching. No great poet has ever survived the rush of popularity without a severe detachment from success.

There are other aspects of this asceticism of the poet-apostle which there is no space to elaborate here. But he must practise detachment also from the symbols which he discovers, detachment from his imagination and from all the pulsating reality which he notices around him. This will be even harder because these things are more real, truer, nearer to his own nature and personality. If he does not keep himself free from the attraction of the great beauty of these things he will become an idolater—and a modernist into the bargain.

Enough will have been said to show how the 'would-be apostle' must attempt to correct himself if he is successfully to preach the word of God. His theology and his prayer will not be sufficient unless linked with the nature of things by means of a true and creative imagination. His supernatural world will be an unreal and unproductive world if he regards it as set apart from nature, as being only in the heavens. He must discover it everywhere and he can only find the redemptive grace of God shining from every atom of reality if he has trained himself in a true awareness and practised the art of poetry.



ON REFLECTING GOD

H. C. E. ZACHARIAS

MANY Catholics feel increasingly disturbed in their faith nowadays by the anthropological approach to religion. Anthropologists currently look upon religion as just one of the aspects of 'culture', as a psychological objectivation of man's subjective emotions, imaginations and explanations of reality. Gods, spirits, myths are therefore just as man-made, as are human institutions, customs, morals, say they.

May I suggest that in this, as in all other cases of disbelief and misbelief, it is quite wrong on our part (and not only tactically inexpedient) to throw the offered opinion into the waste-paper basket as totally unacceptable. We used to do so with Paganism and have only of late come to see that Pagan beliefs are partial truths that need straightening out and being put in the proper perspective—truths which, when thus treated, enrich our own understanding by an emphasis on facts that often have hitherto escaped us.

When therefore we are told that man makes his god, I would accept this statement as quite true, as far as it goes, but add that unfortunately it does not go far enough. Does every puddle in the road make its own sun? Yes and no—poetically yes, scientifically no. Water reflects light, man reflects God: but there is of course a difference. For light does not reside in water, but God does reside in man. Man reflects God, because man was made in the likeness

of God: that likeness, that image, man unconsciously projects, 'externalizes' out of his own being. As a sheet of water will reflect the sun in accordance with the degree of muddiness or disturbance of the water, so also man reflects God's image in himself in accordance with his consciousness, which may be vitiated by his pride, his concupiscence and all the other passions, that obscure the light within him. Man may thus externalize his own lasciviousness as an Astarte or his own bloodthirstiness as a Bellona. He could not do so if there was not to begin with the urge in him to reflect the true God in him—which urge does not operate automatically, but through his free will nature, which has been wounded by the Fall.

Everything reflects God, because everything is an effect of God. Indeed, *God is* means that he is Being itself, that there can be no being except by participation in his being—to that extent Pantheism and Theopantism are true: every pool of being mirrors God. When the Indian contemplative smiles on the tiger about to devour him, with a 'Thou also art he'; when the Upanishads declare *Tat tuam asi* ('That art thou') and *etad tat* ('this is that'), they have only come to realize that man's knowledge of God is his knowledge of God's image within his own self.

We whose faith balances so perfectly God's immanence by his transcendence are at first shocked at the Hindu's identification of *Brahman* (God) and *atman* (self)—but only because we always approach such expressions as razor-sharp theological definitions, when they really are nothing more (or less) than stammering approximations of a mystical experience. Our being is a participation in Being; our very nature has God's signature. The Creator shines out of all creatures—where can man see God more intimately than in the image in which he created him?

Man's nature is an image of God's analogically, inasmuch as in God too there is an imaging forth of himself, a Light of Lights, very God of very God; a reflection of God himself; that can not be an externalization of himself, because there can be nothing external with him. . . an Image which therefore is a Person, a Son of the Father of lights, *apud quem non est transmutatio nec vicissitudinis obumbratio* (' . . . with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning') (James I, 17).

The creature can only know *ex parte*, indirectly, as if looking through a glass darkly (*per speculum in aenigmate*): the glory of that

revelation made in Christ, which surpasses all possibilities of pagan guesses and ratiocinations, consists however just in this, that the eternally blessed will then know directly, as God knows them even now—face to face (*tunc autem facie ad faciem*) (I Cor. 13, 12).



MYSTICISM

VINCENT McNABB, O.P.¹

IF we presume to think that perhaps few of those who use the word 'Mysticism' know its meaning it is because in their simplicity they think it stands for one thing like the word 'oak'; whereas it stands for such things as activities of the intellect and the will, things as different as the ear and the eye, and the oak and the ash.

We may group the meanings of Mysticism thus: Mysticism of the mind or head, and Mysticism of the will or heart. Intellectual mysticism seeks its philosophy, or unity of thought, not in any process of deliberate or formal reasoning but in an unbidden and spontaneous intuition. Mysticism of the heart, with perhaps higher flight, seeks a unity, not of thought or not only of thought, but of life; and seeks it not in intuition or not in intuition alone, but in love.

Like ethics, therefore, mysticism is neither a science nor a philosophy but a life. There is a science of ethics, yet ethics is not a science; just as there is a science of rocks yet rocks are not a science. So too there is a science of mysticism although mysticism is not a science. Moreover, though there is a literature as there is a science both of ethics and of mysticism, yet mysticism is not a literature.

All this goes to show that a man may be a mystical writer or a writer on mysticism without being himself a mystic; even as one man might write a treatise on the Trinity yet remain an atheist, and another might accept all the mysteries of faith on a basis of rationalism.

The real mystics are known to God alone. Only Omniscience can see into the human heart where alone dwells that true love of God which accredits the true mystic.

¹ From the Preface to *The Mistress of Vision*, by Francis Thompson, with a Commentary by John O'Connor (Ditchling, 1918).

FROM THE 'MANUALE SACERDOTIS'

JOHN MIRK¹**How a priest ought frequently to call to mind his holy vocation**

WHEN the Apostle saw the perilous life of priests he spoke to them saying: Look to your vocation, brethren. This as if he had said openly: Love that which you are now neglecting and do that to which you are called. Therefore, most dear one, obey the command of the apostle, often calling to mind your vocation, realizing deeply that God has chosen you for his priest and called you, not to uncleanness, but to glory. Thus you will be holy, innocent, clean, divorced from sinners and more blessed than the angels. Jesus Christ has called you to such heights of dignity and virtue in order that you may serve him in holiness and justice all the days of your life. And after these days he will offer you your reward and will give you eternal joy.

Do not think little of your reward nor become tired of your work, as do those who, after they have received the priesthood, are sorrowful, for these do their office with murmuring and in labour. But as you have received the priesthood with a joyful mind, fulfil it with one no less joyful. Do not be of the number of those of whom the Apostle has said: Do not murmur as some of those murmured and perished by the serpent.

Remember that you are not merely made holy by the anointing with Holy Oil. It is by a holy body and soul that you must be sanctified, for the holiness of the priestly office requires a holy minister. You have been anointed with the oil of rejoicing that you may give your service with happiness of heart and joy of spirit. For the Lord requires joyful devotion from his priest that he may bless him at all times: the priest should show himself a cheerful giver of his service, for such the Lord loves. The Lord loves, not forced, but willing service. Hence the Psalmist says: Gladly will I sacrifice to thee, O Lord. When the Lord sees him giving willing service, he fills him with the merits of all good works.

* * *

¹ Canon Regular of Lilleshall, fl.c. 1400. Translated from an original MS by Fr A. E. Wallis Bull, C.R.L.

Since the work of a priest consists mainly in the heart and the voice, all holy priests should daily offer up the first fruits of heart and tongue to God. Hence St Augustine says: Sacrifice daily to God the first use of heart and voice.

When he rises in the morning the good priest offers with outstretched hands his heart to God and cries with suppliant voice saying: *Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac*, etc., repeating this psalm three times with the same number of *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria*. Hence Hilary of Poitiers says: While you are rising from your bed and before you begin your prayers, say this psalm—*Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac*—three times and the same number of *Pater noster* and you will have no difficulties that day.

When he begins the psalm the priest should fortify himself with the sign of the Cross, for he who loves the Crucifix often guards himself with its sign. Jerome says to Eustochius: on every deed and movement let your hand print the sign of the Cross. So also the hymn sings: *Crux pellit omne crimen, fugiunt crucem tenebre*. Dedicated with such a sign the mind knows no wandering.

After signing himself and reciting these psalms and prayers, let the priest say with humble devotion:

O Lord Jesus Christ, I give thanks to thee
who hast guarded, protected and visited thine
unworthy servant this night, allowed him to
come to this hour whole, healthy and safe.
I give thanks also for all thy other great
benefits which thou hast bestowed upon me
in thy great goodness alone, who livest and
reignest, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

You also, most dear one, love not your bed overmuch but cast sleepiness and sloth far from you. Ambrose says: It is unfitting for a Christian to be found in his bed by the rays of the sun. If this be unfitting for a Christian, how much more so for a priest who is the servant of God.

Rise therefore early that you may be able to offer your first fruits at a fitting time to God. For if you are eager to serve God, he will be eager to serve you. And thus you will be able to say with the psalmist: *Quam Dominus sollicitus est mei*. For the words of the apostle are: Cast all your cares, my brethren, into the hands of him who has ever care for us.

REVIEWS

GESCHIEDENIS VAN DE VROOMHEID IN DE NEDERLANDEN, vol. I: *De Vroomheid tot rond the Jaar 1300*. By Stephanus Axters, O.P. (De Sikkel, Antwerp, 1950: Belgian francs 320).

In a small preliminary volume which Fr Stephanus Axters wrote in French, an English translation of which the present writer recently reviewed (LIFE OF THE SPIRIT IX, pp. 137-8), a beginning was made by considering how far it is possible to write of a type or of types of Christian devotion in the Middle Ages which are recognizably peculiar to the Low Countries. In this major work, his *History of Piety in the Netherlands*, the author has a two-fold aim, to trace the developments of such devotion (this first volume begins with the very earliest manifestations and takes the history to *circa* 1300) and to demonstrate his thesis that the men and women of the Low Countries had, in worshipping God, ways of their own. It is inevitable, and it is by no means to be deplored, that today in Western Europe men's passionate pride in the antiquities and achievements of their native lands, a pride increased by the sorrows and the triumphs of war, should extend even to the life of scholarship and of religion. The extraordinary manifestations of popular devotion which accompanied the canonization of St Nicholas of Flüe in 1947 were characteristic of this spirit: in part they were the rejoicings of the usually undemonstrative Swiss that their country had once again been spared, in part too they were an assertion of a nation's love for a saint whose life and character are marked by qualities which they regard as specially their own. It is very welcome that by this great work of scholarship Fr Axters should have recorded for us the unique contributions which have been made in the past to the spirituality of Europe by Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, countries which today are dear to all good Europeans.

This is not at all to say that his work has in any way been occasioned by recent political events. It is the fruit of a lifetime of scholarly toil; and one cannot too highly praise its author's erudition. His copious bibliographies alone will make his history an essential work of reference, and it is throughout informed by a particularly sensitive awareness of the most recent findings and developments in his own academic discipline and in others vitally related to his subject. Had it not been for the pioneer work of such scholars as Denifle, Wilmart, Delehaye and Combes, this work could not have attained its present form; and to signalise such indebtedness is to praise its author.

This is not a history of mysticism, such as Denifle wrote, nor is it an application of rigorous historical discipline either to a whole class

of records, following Delehaye, or to a narrower field like that investigated by Combes. It is rather a history of the spiritual ambience out of which mysticism grew in the Low Countries, and of which mysticism is only one manifestation. Without necessarily assenting to all Charles Williams' theories, one may recall what he and, following him, Dr Dorothy Sayers have written of Dante as a product of medieval Italian spirituality. More and more, it seems, scholars are once again appealing to 'the spirit of the age', at which most of us were taught to laugh when we were young. Not long ago Dom Combes wrote, with a wisdom which subsequent events have justified, that we should do better, instead of writing of how Tauler influenced Ruysbroek or Ruysbroek Tauler, to try to understand how much both men reflected in their writings spiritual traits which characterized the whole epoch which formed them.

Like wisdom is to be found in Axters's account of the origins of the Beguine movement, which, next to the *Devotio Moderna*, will be reckoned as the outstanding contribution of the Low Countries to medieval religious life. With great clarity and succinctness he develops his theory that the emergence of the Beguines is to be associated with the preaching of the first Crusades and with the sudden appearance, everywhere in Western Europe, of isolated yet similar waves of religious enthusiasm. With great economy he confines himself to the mention, by way of demonstration, of St Francis and of the growth of devotions to the Passion: yet those who may think this account of the *Zeitgeist* partial, in both senses, would be well advised to read, as independent testimony to the forces of enthusiasm released in St Francis' days, the pitiful story of the Children's Crusade as it has now been retold in his latest volume by Steven Runciman, an authority innocent of any partiality towards the Western Church.

Axters shows a particular fineness of touch in sketching for us the beginnings of the Beguines: how almost the first sign that we have that they exist is in the prohibitions of various orders (the Premonstratensians in 1174, for example, the Cistercians in 1228, and soon after the Franciscans and the Dominicans) against further admitting women into their confraternity: how, none the less, groups of pious women attached themselves to various monasteries and relied upon monks and friars for spiritual guidance. We today should call them 'tertiaries': their contemporaries found other, less decorous names for them. Few anecdotes could better evoke the temper of those early days than that in which Caesarius of Heisterbach, writing c. 1222, tells how, as a Cistercian, Walter of Vaucelles, was travelling to Brabant in order to seek for the gift of tears through communing with a pious laywoman, another traveller reviled him, saying 'Why do

you want to run around after these Beguines? If you like, I can show you a decent, God-fearing woman who obtains all that she asks of him.' This incident probably took place before 1199, and in this story we have perhaps the earliest record of the use, pejorative, be it observed, of the name 'Beguine': the next, also recounted by Axters, is Thomas of Cantimpré's tale of the woman who suffered cruelly from *incendium amoris*, and who in her anguish cried out: 'O blessed Gertrude, I'm not a Beguine! Why must I burn like this?'

In his history of the Beguine movement, Axters's method is displayed at its best: yet it also shows that this method is not without its drawbacks. In limiting his investigations to the Low Countries, the author has confined himself within frontiers of which the Middle Ages knew nothing: and no account of the Beguines can be considered adequate which fail to relate how the movement grew and spread from the Netherlands into Germany, how the piety of the Beguines there absorbed and popularized the devotions which later were to influence Eckhart's teachings, and how during the course of the thirteenth century the term 'Beguine' came to mean, from Upsala in the north to Barcelona, a female enthusiast of dubious propriety and questionable orthodoxy. It is of course true that Fr Axters did not set out to write a history of European spirituality, still less of European heterodoxy: but within the confines which he has set himself he is liable, as here, to do less than justice to his subject and to his gifts.

One further objection must be raised: although he deals scrupulously with the early Beguine period, he seems to be chiefly interested, later, to trace the growth of the houses in which the Beguines settled and lived to rules. Consequently, he passes over what may be considered one of the most important features of the whole movement, the way in which it anticipates *docta ignorantia* in providing a way of life in which ignorant working women, called to serve God, could find their 'contemplation', their 'sweetness of devotion', not in *πολυλογία* but in tending the sick, ministering to the dying, burying the dead. Grosseteste said (in private) that the Beguines had climbed higher on the *scala paupertatis* than any others: and we today may think that in an over-organized age they were marked not only by holy ignorance but also by holy anarchy. One is bound to admire the discipline and method with which Fr Axters has organized and disposed his vast sources, to treat of the 'dark period', with the possible beginnings of eremetical and cenobitic life which are recorded in the 'Passions' of the first martyrs, of the 'Frankish period' and the emergence of ordered religious life, and of the third period of the foundation of the great cloisters: but although he has achieved much in this first volume of his history by using not merely devotional writings but also the less

ponderable evidence offered by the liturgists, the archaeologists and the philologists, one is not without an uneasy sense as one reads that there is a yet finer essence, the spirit of devotion as it manifests itself outside of organized religious life and above it, which has not yielded itself even to this superb survey of the Latin, Dutch and French sources of the Middle Ages.

ERIC COLLEDGE

INITIATION THÉOLOGIQUE. Tome IV: *L'Economie du Salut*. (Editions du Cerf; 2100 francs.)

With the appearance of the fourth volume, this courageous attempt to provide a contemporary introduction to Catholic theology is completed, and it will long remain a monument to French Dominican scholarship and zeal. In particular, Père Henry, the editor and principal contributor, deserves congratulation for so intelligent a response to a pressing need: the re-statement of traditional teaching in terms that can command the interest and respect of educated Catholics. This does not mean an 'economy' of truth, an evasion of the awkward, but rather a realistic understanding of the true function of language and the discipline of argument—both alike concerned to serve the perennial truth but not themselves intended to be a mere repetition of what has been said before, in other times to men with very different training and preoccupations.

The present volume is a brilliant example of how the need has been realized. 'The economy of salvation'—Christ, Mary and the Church, the Sacraments, the Second Coming of Christ—is, so to speak, the existent fact of religion. This is what it means to be a Christian: these are the ways in which the salvific work of Christ is made present and operative in his members. And such a treatise as Père Liégé's on the Church reflects a sympathetic understanding of the primary place of a theology of the Church in any living spirituality. Here, stated with authority, are the fundamental theological principles which should be nurturing the piety of Catholics which can otherwise so easily slide away into the sentimental and the subjective. Throughout the whole work indeed one is aware of this realization of the pastoral responsibility of the theologian, who is not simply a manipulator of abstract ideas but rather the mediator of the truths of religion to the people of God.

It is plainly impossible to indicate the wealth of material contained in the thousand pages of this final volume, but one specially welcomes the consistent biblical and liturgical emphasis which gives such strength to the treatment of the sacraments and releases them from the legalistic

and apologetic sphere that has in the past been theirs in 'popular' books for the laity. In fact, *L'Initiation Théologique* is a definitive summary of the achievement of the French Catholic revival: doctrinally authentic, using the resources of modern scholarship with assurance, but always having in mind the actual needs of the Catholic who is prepared to ally his head to his heart in the understanding of his faith.

As in the earlier volumes, there are excellently chosen illustrations, bibliographies, charts and a lexicon of technical terms. No work could be more providential, and certainly none more triumphantly successful in achieving its purpose.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

NATURE AND GRACE. Selections from the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas. Translated and edited by A. M. Fairweather. (S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

For this ninth volume of the *Library of Christian Classics*, the Rev. A. M. Fairweather has selected a number of treatises from St Thomas's *Summa Theologica* and presented them in English translation under the promising title *Nature and Grace*. It is easy to quarrel with any selection since selection inevitably involves omission; but it remains important to point out that St Thomas's treatment of grace, even in the *Summa Theologica*, is not restricted to the treatise on grace, together with the treatises on predestination and the theological virtues, which are here translated, but is to be found also in the questions on the missions of the Divine Persons (Ia, q. 43), on the grace of the angels (Ia, q. 62), on the grace of the first man (Ia, q. 95), on the infused virtues (Ia-IIae, qq. 62-65), on the New Law (Ia-IIae, q. 106), on the grace of Christ (IIIa, q. 8) and on his predestination (IIIa, q. 24), and on sacramental grace (IIIa, qq. 62, 69, 79). The *ex professo* study of grace (Ia-IIae, qq. 109-114) is technically described as being on grace *ut auxilium*; and it would be quite false to suppose that this represents even the most important part of St Thomas's and the Catholic teaching on grace, although it is certainly true that it is the most controverted part.

The translation is in general successful in making smooth reading of St Thomas's scholastic economy. Unfortunately it suffers from a number of deficiencies, as any careful comparison with the original will make apparent. These deficiencies, noticed in an examination of certain selected articles, may be classed under four heads. (1) Slips. Thus for *actuales* of the original (Ia-IIae, q. 82, a. 2, ad 1m) we find 'natural' (p. 122); for *lumen gratiae* (Ia-IIae, q. 109, *in corp.*) we have 'the light of

glory' (p. 139). (2) Cloudiness. Perhaps for the sake of smooth reading, Mr Fairweather has on a number of occasions diffused the clarity of St Thomas's distinctions. For example, distinguishing *debitum*, St Thomas says: 'Unum quidem ex merito proveniens, quod refertur ad personam, cuius est agere meritoria opera. . . . Aliud est debitum ex conditione naturae. . . .' It is not adequate to translate this: 'In one sense it [debt] is the correlative of merit, applicable to a person upon whom it is incumbent to achieve works of merit. . . . In a second sense it refers to the condition which is natural to one . . .' (p. 166). The opposition person-nature has been obscured. (3) But perhaps this deficiency is associated with a graver deficiency, an inadequate acquaintance with St Thomas's Latin. *Consequor*, for instance, surely never means 'seek to attain' (p. 115) but only 'attain' in St Thomas's usage; *sensu composito* is a term of logical grammar concerning the qualification of the composition of subject and predicate, and it is simply wrong to translate 'If all factors are taken into consideration' (p. 113). (4) Examples of what might be called *doctrinal* deficiencies in the present version are the translation of *Deum esse* (Ia, q. 2, a. 3, *in corp.*) as 'God's existence' (p. 54), and, much worse, *status naturae integrae* (Ia-IIae, q. 109, a. 2 and elsewhere) as 'the state of pure nature'. The first of these deficiencies is unfortunately also to be found in the standard translation by the English Dominicans. The termination of each of the Five Ways is an *affirmation*, and not any kind of *acquaintance* (compare Ia, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2m; p. 63 in Mr Fairweather's translation). It is *that God is* that we demonstrate, and not God's existence. As to the second of these doctrinal deficiencies, it is really quite deplorable that Mr Fairweather should have contributed to what is already a monstrous confusion by translating *integer* by 'pure'. He may feel that by having translated *integritas* by 'purity' he has avoided the confusion; but *integritas* does not *ordinarily* mean 'purity', and one can only suppose that he has so translated it to allow himself to speak of a 'state of pure nature', leaving the 'pure' ambiguous. (The Dominican translation has 'a state of perfect nature'.)

These examples should be sufficient to show that while a general idea of some of St Thomas's positions may be gathered from this translation, it should not be relied upon in detail. The bibliography lists a Chinese translation of the *Summa* and five translations, into as many European languages, of G. K. Chesterton's *St Thomas Aquinas*, but not (for instance) Père Chenu's *Introduction à l'étude de S. Thomas d'Aquin*. There is a brief but interesting Introduction, no less interesting for being, from what might be called a professional Thomist's standpoint, eccentric.

CITEAUX AND HER ELDER DAUGHTERS. By Archdale King. (Burns and Oates; 30s.)

This work deals with the five leading Cistercian abbeys: Citeaux, the mother house and her first four daughter houses, La Fette founded in 1113, Pontigny founded in 1114, Clairvaux and Morimond in 1115. It covers their history from the foundations up to the suppression of religious houses during the French Revolution and, in the case of Citeaux, this history includes its re-occupation by Cistercians in 1898 and gives the line of abbots down to the present day.

This survey is particularly interesting because, although the early history of these abbeys, and especially that of Citeaux and Clairvaux, has been much written about, their later history has received far less attention. We must also be grateful to Mr King for bringing together in one convenient volume a wealth of material which otherwise could only be acquired by lengthy research, often into not easily accessible documents.

The book is a mine of fascinating information. There is, for example, an extremely vivid and detailed description of Clairvaux as it was seen by the Queen of Sicily in 1517. The horses of Morimond, we are told, were renowned for their breed and many knights from the neighbourhood bought their horses for the second Crusade from the monastic stables. Clos de Vougeot, a name familiar to any wine lover, belonged to Citeaux and in 1667, during a dispute between the Cistercians of the Strict Observance and those of the Common Observance, we find a religious of the former complaining that it would be useless for his congregation to attend the General Chapter because the Abbot of Citeaux would be able to sway the assembly by liberally pouring out for them his excellent wine.

One thing which stands out amidst a welter of detail is the very swift decline of the Order from its pristine fervour; as early as 1181 Caltrivaux, St Bernard's own monastery, was receiving serfs in absolute contravention of Cistercian statutes. This decline does not seem to have been into real decadence but rather into a respectable mediocrity, where the emphasis tended to be on scholastic attainments, on the maintenance and increase of property and on the embellishment of monastic buildings.

In his introduction, Mr King admits that his method, which is to recount the history of each house by way of short accounts of the particular happenings under each abbot, lies open to many objections. To the present reviewer it seems that one of the most serious objections presented by this method is the difficulty of following up any one topic consecutively. This difficulty could be overcome by an adequate index, but, unfortunately, this is not the case here. For example the

topics of serfdom and tithes, both with important bearings on Cistercian development through the centuries, are unmentioned in the index although there are numerous references to these questions scattered throughout the book.

Quite a full bibliography is given, though it is a little surprising to find Dom J. Leclercq's name absent from it. His article on Geoffrey of Auxerre (*Les écrits de Geoffrey d'Auxerre* *Rev. Bened.* Nos. 3-4 1952) might have been used to explain Geoffrey's mysterious deposition or resignation in 1165. Dom Leclercq suggests that this happened because Geoffrey remained on good terms with Henry II of England which displeased Louis VII of France and his brother Henry, Archbishop of Reims, as Henry II had incurred papal displeasure over the murder of Becket.

Regarding the question of Cistercian exemption from diocesan control, Mr King remarks with truth that this was the result of a succession of papal privileges. Might it not also have been in some measure due to the Cistercian Constitutions themselves, by means of which the disciplinary machinery of Cîteaux became far greater than that wielded by any bishop, and the abbatial elections were so elaborately safeguarded that episcopal intervention was unnecessary?

A map showing the abbeys mentioned would have been a useful addition to the text.

A. J. MEIKLE

A CHRISTOLOGY FROM THE SERMONS OF ST VINCENT FERRER. (Selected and translated by S.M.C. (Blackfriars; 12s. 6d.)

These sermons are selected from the many thousands contained in the five volumes published by the Dominicans of Valencia in 1591, sermons preached by Master Vincent during the phenomenal apostolate up and down Europe which occupied the last twenty years of his life, 1399-1419. As S.M.C. points out in the Preface, they are something unique in spiritual literature, in that they are not studied treatises, but actual notes of sermons either jotted down before delivery or taken down during and after St Vincent's discourse. In contrast to most published medieval sermons, and many modern sermons for that matter, they bring one into contact with the personality of the preacher, and one can almost picture the scene as he held spellbound the vast throngs that flocked to hear him wherever he went. That he was endowed with the gift of tongues seems the only explanation of the fact that he managed to make himself understood by so many different nationalities, since the only language he could speak was the Valencian dialect of Spanish.

S.M.C. has selected and translated some twenty-four of St Vincent's

sermons dealing with the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord. They are nearly all occasional, preached on some special Sunday or Feast, and they vary in length and style from the concise *reportatio* of the sermon for the First Sunday in Advent to the elaborate Good Friday discourse which gives a complete history of the Passion and takes up thirty pages of the present book. The style is a curious mixture of medieval and modern. There are the divisions and subdivisions of the subject-matter, and the allegorical interpretations of Scripture which will seem rather far-fetched to modern ears. 'The second water pot is Sacramental Confession' sounds slightly disrespectful. There is the preoccupation with numbers, including an ingenious interpretation of the 153 fishes caught in the net. 'A hundred signifies Christian; for as ten times ten makes a hundred, so Christians should observe the ten commandments. Fifty signifies the Jews, for, as five times ten makes fifty, so there are five books of the Law in the Old Testament. Three signifies the Saracens, for they believe three things: that Christ, born of a Virgin, is a holy Man and reigns in glory.' There is a great deal of imaginary dialogue and apocryphal detail interwoven with the Gospel text, though the preacher is careful to justify its inclusion. 'If we do not read all this in the Gospels, still it is not contrary to their teaching, and Doctors and saints have written in this fashion; so we may piously believe that matters occurred thus.' At the same time, all the sermons have a practical application to some aspect of Christian living, Mass, the sacraments, especially, as we should expect, Confession, and works of penance. Our Lady taking the child Jesus up to the Temple is an example to parents to see that their children go to Mass on Sundays; young girls especially 'have an evil custom of missing Mass; it is the cause of many misfortunes which befall them, for then they have opportunities of sin which they have not during the week when their parents are at home. Therefore, fathers and mothers, take your children to church with you.'

We must be grateful to S.M.C. for giving us this sample of medieval preaching at its greatest and most powerful and for making available so valuable a selection from the output of one of the greatest of medieval preachers. Incidentally, we might have been given a sermon on what was reputed to be St Vincent's favourite theme, the Last Judgment and its imminence. There are only passing references in these sermons, as in that on the Ascension: 'We may say definitely that it is soon, very soon.'

The translation reads well, and seem to convey much of the verve which must have characterized the original. In English it is probably better to talk of 'individual' rather than 'monastic' ethic (p. 97).

E.C.

THE INTERIOR CARMEL. By John C. H. Wu. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

East and West meet and blend in this book. It is an illustration of the universality of holiness. Dr Wu, a convert Chinese lawyer, diplomat, professor, 'made himself the pupil of some of the outstanding authorities on theology' in Rome, and in 1949 began to teach Chinese philosophy at the University of Hawaii, thus deepening his knowledge of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. These strongly reminded him of the three ways of Christian asceticism and mysticism. Thus when he came to teach mysticism and Thomistic philosophy at the School of Religion affiliated to the same University he was able to draw the impressive parallel between the way of perfection so persistently sought in the East and the way of perfection taught by Christ. This book incorporates the substance of these lectures. It must be unique among spiritual reading books.

Dr Wu has observed and collected, over many years, the sayings of saints and sages in East and West, has seen how they fit into his pattern of thought and holiness (for it is quite evident that he practises what he preaches) and here weaves them into a lecture pattern of which the three classic ways of the spiritual life are the basic design. The presentation is superficially academic but the author's style and manner convert the neatly divided treatise into a kind of long causerie. It is just a kind, gentle, quiet talk, from a learned, holy gentleman who is full of his subject. Of Chaucer it was written: '... his terms were not dark, but pleasant, easy and plain, no word he spoke in vain.' Dr Wu is rather like that, compared with some text-books.

There is always a faint suspicion, hovering in the mind, ready to pounce, when one reads an Eastern writer, that the spiritual life will be reduced to a psychological training, a super-ascesis, a mental technique. Dr Wu shows, though not of set purpose, how the Christian version of this is the science of the saints. The technique is but the craft of simplicity and suffering, the skill of those who have learnt to be children.

Quotations abound. Sometimes they seem almost naive—as when he quotes Evelyn Underhill on 'natural' and 'supernatural'; but one comes to see he that is merely picking up apt confirmations of his thought from every source that comes to hand, finding good in everything.

There is a very interesting analogy, taken from Dr Paul Sih, on page 244. 'A worthwhile and satisfactory painting job usually calls for three coats of paint, first sealing, then priming and finally finishing. The first coat which is usually done with shellac is to cover the scars and fill up the cracks and crevices of the surface. The second coat is to prime the surface with colour which is smooth and lovely but which gives no brightness. It is only the third coat that brings out the

beautiful undertones and gives a long-lasting bright finish. Although the effects of these three coats are quite different—the first is for orientation; the second fortification; the third, perfection—the need for covering the whole ground in each coating is the same and no single inch may be neglected. Of course the finishing touch is most difficult and calls for more time and skill. I wonder whether these three coats of paint may not be likened respectively to the purgative way, the illuminative way and the unitive way . . .'. Dr Wu's approving comments develop the thought and connect it with the cycle of the liturgical year, Advent to Epiphany, Septuagesima to Passiontide, Easter to Advent.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

THROUGH HIM AND WITH HIM AND IN HIM by Venantius Buessing, O.F.M.CAP. (J. F. Wagner, New York and B. Herder, London; 25s.)

'Father, we might have just as well stayed at home and read a book. If you ever will be appointed to give retreats, never read, but preach your retreat well-prepared, in plain and simple words, from the heart, and your words will reach the hearts of the hearers.'

The author of these retreat conferences—for such is this book—quotes this piece of advice given him by 'a very saintly and scholarly Capuchin' at the end of a retreat which had been read rather than preached to them. The old Capuchin had spoken wisely and to the point. There is more to a retreat than a series of well-prepared, co-ordinated lectures, delivered with perfect tone and emphasis, with just the correct word on every occasion to express the variants of meaning. There must be the personal contact with the man himself. He must, of course, speak the truth and offer solid food for thought; the appeal is to the mind and will, and not to the emotions only. Ultimately, it is his conviction of that truth, his evident love of it, and outward living of it, that will leave an impression and effect something worthwhile and lasting in his hearers.

These conferences are printed as they were preached; 'simple language on a subject most sublime'. Something of the author's intense love, and zeal, and sincerity comes through in these pages. And yet it is not true of Fr Venantius—unfortunately for this book of his conferences—that we would profit as much by reading him as by hearing him: the man himself is so evidently more effective and compelling than his words.

This book, then, will be of most value to those who have had the good fortune to have listened to a retreat by Fr Venantius. But it would be ungenerous to say that it will be of no profit to anyone else. The conferences make no claim to be a treatise on speculative theology.

All the way through the approach is practical. The author takes the spiritual realities which make up the daily life of the priest and the religious, and asks us to look at them. As we look with him—and that means trying to look with *Him*—a beauty, and a significance, and an inspiration are revealed, which, perhaps, we once knew, but have long since forgotten in the routine of life.

It is a bit misleading to describe the book—as does the cover—as ‘a full eight-day retreat on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.’ The author, too, speaks in the same way of a retreat on the Mass. For an actual retreat the programme proposed is heavy. Besides the opening and closing conferences, there are twenty-four others. The first two days are given over to the Mass, which is, undoubtedly, the dominant theme. Then follow three days on the usual retreat subjects—sin, death, and grace; faith, hope, and charity; poverty, chastity, and obedience. For the sixth day we return to the theme of the Mass with conferences on the altar, the tabernacle, and the communion rail. The last two days offer a mixed bag in which are talks on the divine office and the breviary, our Lady, the contemplative life, and on the need for being Christlike. The conferences on the Mass, hope, charity, the breviary, and on being Christlike are among the best.

But Fr Venantius cannot escape criticism. In many cases he almost spoils a good point by being too personal in his attitude. It is true that one should not rush on to the altar to say Mass without any preparation; nor, after Mass, should one go off immediately for breakfast. But no one can lay down hard and fast rules about time spent in preparation and thanksgiving—fifteen minutes formal preparation, and preferably before the Blessed Sacrament, with fifteen minutes (no, ‘make it sixteen’) thanksgiving. Even if one makes no *formal* preparation there is usually a space of twenty to twenty-five minutes between ‘the bed linens and the altar linens’ in which to collect one’s thoughts. A similar kind of personal law is evident in his remarks on the breviary. Is it really an advantage to anticipate matins and lauds? A more serious objection can be raised to the attitude of mind expressed by the following statement: ‘Fathers, how many converts do you make every year? One old priest in Wisconsin baptized his one thousandth convert the papers reported lately. A model priest and model parishioners have such results.’ One hopes that this is no more than a logical muddle.

The conference on poverty shows a lack of balance between absolute and relative values. A saint may have said: ‘Please give me *our* handkerchief.’ But we have not all the prudence and charity of the saints, and there would be utter chaos in a community if the phrase ‘*ad simplicem usum*’ were to be taken as giving to everyone the right to use anything. *Use*—as distinct from holding in trust for the community,

as does the bursar—implies that something has been given into the charge of a particular person for *his* use. And on the day of judgment might we not find that the religious who needed several trunks to move his goods was in fact poorer in spirit than the one who boasted that he never needed anything more than a large handkerchief?

In all these cases the important truths that are being brought to our notice—ultimately, a matter of right attitude of mind—are almost falsified by a wrong emphasis on details.

It is good to remind ourselves that we must die one day. But is *death* the last end God had in mind when he inspired the sacred author to write: 'In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin'? It seems a trivial point, but in fact it marks a fundamental difference in outlook. And now and again it would be enlightening if authors would explain in what sense they understand God to be a Prisoner in the Tabernacle. Serious objection could be taken to his referring to the moment of Communion as 'the climax of that hour (i.e. the Mass), the holiest moment of that holiest hour . . .'. In his teaching on prayer Fr Venantius does not see eye to eye with St Thomas. Again, this goes deeper than the mere fact of differing. The author is more than a little suspicious of the prayer of many people: 'it has become a pious exercise in selfish petitions for help in their needs'. Through the fault of the priests the people have been misled about the true notions of prayer—their attention has been fixed on the business of asking for things from God. We must right the wrong, and get them rather to give praise and thanks to God in their prayers. Anyone who has understood the teaching of St Thomas will see that this is not a sound position to adopt. In fact St Thomas uses the substance of this argument in two of his objections in the article: Whether prayer is an act of religion.

On page 45 there is a misprint: 'Meditator' should read 'Mediator'.

M.J.S.

MARY AND MODERN MAN. Edited by Thomas J. M. Burke, S.J. (The America Press, New York; \$3.50.)

'Cultural relevance of Mary' is a slightly intimidating phrase and this book, consisting of ten essays on that theme, looks at first glance to be like just another of those learned Marian books—dry, not sweet. But the editor has chosen his team of contributors with care. They are writers who feel as well as think. Two of the ten are English, one Hungarian, seven American.

Fr Frederick A. Harkins, S.J., opens with 'Mary's Meaning for the Individual', a happy note to strike in a book about modern man. At first eloquent, Fr Harkins seems to tire before the end, as if he had shot his bolt before he had completed the required number of pages.

Fr Conrad Pepler's essay, 'The Great Mother', which comes next, is the most satisfying for the theological reader. This essay alone takes a really universal theme and keeps to it. The one idea, motherhood, as a human, perennial, powerful factor in the whole life of man, is finely developed as a real principle of Marian theology. This section combines speculation and devotion in true Dominican style.

'Our Lady and Civilization' is the subject aptly assigned to Daniel Sargent. From a vast store of reading he draws a thesis that our Lady has given value to civilization in the past and can do so in the future. 'Mary and the Flesh', by Paul Palmer, S.J., turns out to be an excellent exposé of the great truth that our Lady has always been a bulwark against any kind of Manicheism. This essay is a masterly review of the impact of the Marian dogmas upon the persistent heresy of matter-spirit dualism. Father John Lafarge, S.J., is concerned to refute a suggestion made in *The Christian Century*, December 23rd, 1953, to the effect that the popularity of 'the Marian cult' is a danger to the ethical content of Christianity. He boldly puts the offending words 'ethical content' in his title, refutes the implied sentimentalism and draws, incidentally, a picture of Mary which clings to the memory. Of the remaining essays Father John S. Kennedy's is outstanding: Mary's message to modern man at La Salette. It is a story excellently told, a moral excellently drawn.

The other contributors are Father William A. Donaghy, S.J. ('Mary's Place in Reality'), Fr Martindale ('At Lourdes and Fatima'), William Juhasz ('Mother of the Church of Silence') and the Editor, Father Thomas J. M. Burke, S.J., who writes on Mary's 'Sense of the Apostolate'.

G. M. CORR, O.S.M.

COURTES PRIÈRES POUR LE CHRÉTIEN DANS LE SIÈCLE. (Desclée de Brouwer; 105 fr. b.)

This is an excellent manual of prayers, dating from earliest Christian times to the present. Grouped under the petitions of the Our Father and subdivided into different acts of a soul at prayer, are extracts from Holy Scripture and the Liturgy, words of saints recognized as masters of prayer, beside touching strophes of Negro spirituals and lines from many other uncanonized persons, living and dead. We find Verlaine next to St Bernard, Pascal preceding Tagore, Péguy following St John of the Cross, the prayers of St Thérèse and Sister Elisabeth of the Trinity. Varying in length from a developed meditation of Lancelot Andrewes to the ejaculation of St Augustine, 'Mon Dieu, ma vie', these prayers meet every human need. One appreciates particularly the moving 'Prière d'une Jociste' and 'Prière quotidienne des catholiques chinots persécutés.'

Occasionally to the English mind the headings of the sub-divisions appear slightly forced and tend to encourage introspection rather than spontaneous conversation with God. But there is a fine selection of Scriptural passages, 'Peuple de Jahvé', which reflect the dignity of a Christian. Under the seventh petition one welcomes prayers of such vigorous apostles as Cardinal Suhard and Abbé Godin, appealing for guidance lest activity should become too natural. Chiefly in the Scriptural passages it is God who speaks to the soul, opening the way to a more intimate dialogue. The only notable omission, the prayer of our Lord in St John, chapter seventeen, is perhaps being reserved by the compilers for their future books of prayers, to which this volume makes us look forward.

SR M. AGNES, O.P.

PHILOSOPHY FOR THE LAYMAN. By Aegidius Doolan, O.P., S.T.M. (Dominican Publications, Dublin; 12s. 6d.)

This is the second edition of a book first published ten years ago. It consists of fifty-eight short essays originally contributed to 'Hibernia'. Its aim, the author says in his Foreword, is 'an orderly treatment, as brief as clarity allows, of the fundamental problems of Natural Philosophy, so as to show their bearing on our moral life'. The larger part of the book is concerned with Moral Philosophy but, since 'what a man ought to do . . . depends upon what he has the power to do', this is led up to, after a handful of essays on general basic questions, by an examination of some main theses in Thomist Psychology. This treatment is necessarily slight but is nevertheless sufficient to make the discussion of Ethics that follows more intelligible, and the author endeavours not merely to state the Thomist position, but to consider some of the major objection to this view. The essays are, for the most part, brisk and lively and are full of quotations from a remarkably wide range of sources. Whilst the exposition is generally clear there are a number of cases where the brevity of the articles and the need to end one and open another seems to interrupt rather than aid the development of a single train of thought. An impression of jerkiness might have been avoided had several articles been forged into a longer essay at these points. However, in spite of a somewhat misleading title, the book should be of value to the layman, who realizes that the problems, personal and communal, besetting us are not to be solved at the level upon which they are commonly approached, and who appreciates that 'to bring things back to principle, to link life with its object, words with their meaning, whatever is a means with its end', is, as Fr Doolan observes, 'the principle need of today'.

M.T.

NOTICES

PREPARING FOR EASTER (Burns, Oates; 6s.) was designed by its author, Fr Clifford Howell, S.J., as a double course of sermons, morning and evening, by which priests might prepare their congregations for a more intelligent and fruitful participation in the ceremonies of the restored Easter Vigil. The sermons are planned to begin on Septuagesima Sunday, but the book was published too late to achieve that object this year. It is still, however, not too late for those who wish by spiritual reading to prepare themselves for the Easter Vigil, and this book lends itself readily to such use and contains many good things to assist that preparation.

SPIRITUAL READING of the best sort, simply written, full of sound doctrine, and based immediately on the Scriptures, is provided by a little booklet entitled *The Interior Life*, by a Carthusian. Written originally in French, it has been rendered into very readable English and is to be had from St Hugh's Charterhouse, Partridge Green, Horsham, Sussex, for 1s. 6d.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE LATIN, by a Religious of C.S.M.V., have been commended more than once in these pages. Now from the same gifted Sister we receive *The Pastoral Prayer of St Aelred of Rievaulx* in its first English translation, together with the Latin text hitherto available only in a collection published by the late Dom Andre Wilmart. The publisher is the Dacre Press, and the price 1s. 6d. Another Cistercian writer, William of St Thierry, has been well served by the two translators of his short soliloquy, *On Contemplating God* (translated by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker) published by Mowbrays in their Fleur de Lys Series at 2s. 6d. In the same series is an English rendering by an anonymous 'Friar of the Society of St Francis' of St Bonaventure's *The Mystical Vine* (Mowbrays; 3s. 6d.).

IN ESSAYS IN CHRISTIAN UNITY (Blackfriars; 13s. 6d.) Fr Henry St John, O.P. has brought together a number of articles concerning the Ecumenical movement, written over the past twenty-five years. He has added an introduction and two valuable Appendices, of which the first contains the two leaders which began and ended the famous *Times* correspondence on 'Catholicism Today' in 1949. We hope to include a full-length review of this book in our next issue.

EXTRACTS

RELIGION IN PAPER-BACKS. Collins the publishers have inaugurated a new venture by re-publishing in paper-backs and shiny picture-covers, certain popular religious works. The attempt is not, however, as new as they may claim, since Sheed and Ward made a courageous effort before the war in their Unicorn series to provide a sort of religious 'Penguin' within reach of the most modest purse. What is new is the shiny cover which we in this country have adopted from America. Now the shy or nervous reader can buy C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* or his three booklets *Broadcast Talks*, *Christian Behaviour* and *Beyond Personality*, here in a single volume called *Mere Christianity*, for two shillings each and whip them out in train or bus without his neighbour being aware that he is not deep in a Peter Cheyney. The publishers tell us that *Screwtape Letters* has already sold nearly a quarter of a million copies, but they are confident that this cheap and attractive format will entice 'a whole new reading public'. Both these books are worthy of an even wider public than they have already achieved; there are many for instance who are interested in temptation and virtues and vices who would find their lively presentation in *Screwtape* easy reading compared with the stiff books on the subject they put down hurriedly if they ever take them up. To *Mere Christianity* Dr Lewis has contributed a new preface defending his attempt to put forward a 'common Christianity' beyond the realms of the disputes of 'the Churches'. He says for example:

Ever since I became a Christian I have thought that the best, perhaps the only, service I could do for my unbelieving neighbours was to explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times. I had more than one reason for thinking this. In the first place, the questions which divide Christians from one another often involve points of high theology or even of ecclesiastical history, which ought never to be treated except by real experts. . . . And secondly, I think we must admit that the discussion of these disputed points has no tendency at all to bring an outsider into the Christian fold.

However dubious we may be in thinking that Christianity can be put forward in an H.C.F. form, it is evident that the new reading public in view is mainly non-Christian. But with a word of warning about the inevitable defects of such a view of a common denominator many a Christian, too, has found and will continue to find illuminating points in this volume too.

(*Screwtape Letters*, and *Mere Christianity*: Fontana Books; Collins; 2s. each.)

THE RATTLE OF ROSARIES. The opening paragraph of the February issue of *The Rosary* (Walker, Hinckley; 4s. 6d. per annum) a lively English religious magazine which is not yet sufficiently well-known, may help those who complain of Rosaries at Mass to complain less:

A complaint came from Wales in 1590 that 'the people do carry their beads openly, and make much a clapping with them in church that a man can scarce hear the minister for the noise thereof; alleging that they can read on their beads as others on their books.' The statement is not only evidence of Welsh dislike of Protestantism even at that comparatively late date; it includes an important assertion about the rosary. It is, according to the mind of those long-ago Welshmen, a source of information, a volume for study. What they thought is in agreement with the mind of the Church.

NEGRO SPIRITUALS have something to teach us within their simple naïvety. This is the burden of an article in the March issue of *La Vie Spirituelle*, and it is the second on the subject in recent months. It is time that such simplicity with its popular appeal was considered.

SPODE HOUSE

Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffordshire

(Telephone: Armitage 331)

Holy Week Retreat preached by Fr Illtud Evans, O.P., following the full liturgical ceremonies in the Priory Church, with the Restored Easter Vigil.
6—9 April

'Rhythm in Worship & Life'—The second Music & Religion Week; Lectures 12—18 April by Fr J. D. Crichton, Fr Sebastian Bullough, O.P., Anthony Milner, Wilfrid Mellers, Fr Lawrence Bevenot, O.S.B., etc. Recitals by George Malcolm and Marie Wilson. English Vespers composed by Anthony Milner.

'Faith, Morals & Psychiatry'—a weekend on modern Psychology. Speakers 29 April—2 May include: Fr Thomas Gilby, O.P., Père Plé, O.P., Dr Edward Larkin, Dr Charles Burns.

For full particulars of these and other events, write or phone:
THE WARDEN, SPODE HOUSE, RUGELEY, STAFFS
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